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TORONTO | NEWS

'A bunch of yahoos,' Ont. premier says of people protesting COVID-19 emergency measures

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TORONTO -- Ontario Premier Doug Ford says he's furious at the "bunch of yahoos" who decided to flout physical distancing measures and emergency laws to protest outside Queen's Park Saturday afternoon, calling them "irresponsible, reckless and selfish."

About 100 people gathered in front of Queen's Park, chanting slogans demanding Ford "open up Ontario" and end all emergency measures, with some carrying signs claiming the novel coronavirus is a hoax.

Ford was visibly angry at the gathering, which violates the province's month-long order banning all gatherings of more than five people.

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"We have healthcare workers down the street at these hospitals working round the clock, to protect the community and 99.9 per cent of people in this province are working together side by side, that's the reason we're able to see a flattening of the curve," Ford said. "But then we have a bunch of yahoos out in the front of Queen's Park sitting there protesting that the place isn't open, as they are breaking the law. And putting everyone in jeopardy, putting themselves in jeopardy, putting workers in jeopardy and god forbid one of them ends up in the hospital down the street."

He said he hoped Toronto police would ticket them.

Not keeping at least two metres apart from someone not in your own household currently carries a fine of \$880 in Toronto.

Some demonstrators complained about not being able to get a haircut for the past five weeks, while others called media reports about the virus' spread "fake news."

A few demonstrators also brought children to the rally.

"Imagine if we had every single Ontarian acted like the way they're doing right now," Ford said. "It would set us back months.

The virus has so far infected at least 13,000 Ontarians, killing 811.

A spokesperson for the Toronto police said no arrests were made and no tickets were issued following the protest, saying the crowd was compliant and exercised good social distancing.

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Demonstrators gather during a protest to end the shutdown due to COVID-19 at Queen's Park in Toronto on Saturday, April 25, 2020. THE CANADIAN PRESS/ Tijana Martin

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 Marco Muzzo, centre, leaves the Newmarket courthouse surrounded by family members including his mother Dawn Muzzo, right, on February 4, 2016. A Toronto-area woman whose three children and father died in a horrific car crash says Muzzo, the drunk driver responsible, has been granted day parole. THE CANADIAN PRESS/ Christopher Katsarov

Drunk driver Marco Muzzo's wish to live near deadly crash site shows lack of victim empathy: parole board

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